

iPad Hack Statement Of Responsibility

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Editor's note: Andrew Auernheimer, also known by his pseudonym weev, is an American grey hat hacker and self-described Internet troll. Follow him on Twitter [@rabite](http://twitter.com/rabite) (<http://twitter.com/rabite>).

In June of 2010 there was an AT&T webserver on the open Internet. There was an API on this server, a URL with a number at the end. If you incremented this number, you saw the next iPad 3G user email address. I thought it was egregiously negligent for AT&T to be publishing a complete target list of iPad 3G owners, and I [took a sample of the API output to a journalist at Gawker](http://gawker.com/5559346/apples-worst-security-breach-114000-ipad-owners-exposed) (<http://gawker.com/5559346/apples-worst-security-breach-114000-ipad-owners-exposed>).

I did this because I despised people I think are unjustly wealthy and wanted to embarrass them. I thought this is the United States of America where we have the right to do basic arithmetic and query public webservers.

I was convicted of two consecutive five-year felonies, and am now awaiting sentencing.

I left the [Aaron Swartz memorial tonight](http://news.cnet.com/8301-10797_3-57564876-235/memorial-service-honors-swartz-as-activist-individual/) (http://news.cnet.com/8301-10797_3-57564876-235/memorial-service-honors-swartz-as-activist-individual/) emotionally exhausted. Here is a guy who was beloved by many of my close friends, whose suffering and miseries I have shared in kind. I'll never forget when the Secret Service started following me. My lover at the time and I treated it like a game, spending our days ditching surveillance in the best ways possible: speedboats, helicopters, club bouncers.

Over time, this has become less and less of a game. It soon became clear that I could not be both an activist and a capitalist. I quit my six figure job at the time because the former was more important to me. Then one day, everything changed. FBI agents tried to frame me for terrorism in 2008. Twice. They ruined my career, my relationship, my life. Nobody believed that I could be a terrorist so now they try to libel me as an identity thief.

Lawrence Lessig [said of Aaron's indictment](http://lessig.tumblr.com/post/40347463044/prosecutor-as-bully) (<http://lessig.tumblr.com/post/40347463044/prosecutor-as-bully>) that the prosecutor Ortiz was "either an idiot, or a liar." I know this feeling all too well.

One of my prosecutors, Michael Martinez, claimed that our querying a public webserver was criminal because "it isn't like going to ESPN and checking your sports team's scores."

The facts: AT&T admitted, at trial, that they "published" this data. Their words. Public-facing, programmatic accesses of APIs happen upwards of a trillion times per day. Twitter broke 13 billion on their API ages ago. This is something that happens more than the entire population of Earth, daily. The government has no problem with this up until you transform the output into something offensive to important people. People with "disruptive" startups, this is your fair warning: They are coming for you next.

The other one of my prosecutors, Zach Intrater, said that a comment I made about Goatse Security, my information security working group, starting a certification process to declare systems "goatse tight" was evidence of my intent to personally profit. For those not in on the joke: Goatse [is an Internet meme](http://knowyourmeme.com/memes/goatse) (<http://knowyourmeme.com/memes/goatse>) referencing a man holding open his anus very widely. The mind reels.

I can't survive like this. I am happy to be hitting a prison cell soon. They ruined my business. The feds get approval of who I can work for or with: they rejected one company because the CEO had a social network profile with an occupation listed as "hacker." They prohibit me from touching any computer that isn't federally monitored. I do my best to slang Perl code on an Android device to comply with my bail conditions. It isn't pretty.

Ivy league educated and wealthy, Aaron dealt with his indictment so badly because he thought he was part of a special class of people that this didn't happen to. I am from a rundown shack in Arkansas. I spent many years thinking people from families like his got better treatment than me. Now I realize the truth: The beast is so monstrous it will devour us all. None will be spared.

So now I stare at a form that the government wants me to fill out before sentencing labelled "acceptance of responsibility" and wonder what I can possibly fill in this slot. This letter is it.

I accept my responsibility, and hope you do too, of dismantling this terrible empire so that this can't happen to anyone.

This is the difference between the prosecutors and FBI agents and I. They wish me utterly destroyed, and have been hounding me for years of my life. They have been surveilling me, by their own admission, since I was 15. You know what I wish for? A world where no man may abridge the liberty of another. Not me, not you, not the FBI, not federal prosecutors. I actually hope they have fulfilling lives, and come to realize the mistake of treating our Constitution like toilet paper.

This is a country where if you express ideas that federal agents don't like you, you will be beaten, imprisoned, or killed. I accept my responsibility for offending seditious thugs, liars and tyrants. I say this is the duty of all decent citizens left.

God bless.

Andrew Auernheimer

(*Those who assert our right to access public web APIs can donate to the effort to overturn the Computer Fraud and Abuse Act. More info at cfaadefensefund.com/. - Andrew Auernheimer)

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